

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Panetta:

In light of the Defense Department's request for a new round of military base realignments beginning in FY 2013, we write to strongly urge that the Los Angeles Air Force Base (LAAFB) and its Space and Missile Systems Center (SMC) be retained without any reductions.

California is home to fully half of the nation's aerospace sector and one-quarter of the global aerospace industry. A majority of state's aerospace industry is located in Los Angeles County, where hundreds of companies – from large aerospace firms to small machine shops – have attracted a highly-educated and specialized workforce, comprising about 250,000 people.

While California has long been a leader in aerospace, a major factor for its continued presence in the state is LAAFB and SMC and the \$9 billion in annual contracts issued for space and missile requirements of the Department and other federal agencies. The economic reach of LAAFB and SMC extends throughout the Los Angeles area, including the San Fernando Valley, and to other parts of Southern California.

One of SMC's critical missions is to manage the development and launch of satellites for a variety of national security programs. To perform that mission, it is vital that SMC remain in close proximity to other federal aerospace facilities, including the launch facilities at Vandenberg Air Force Base and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, as well as to the industrial and scientific infrastructure and workforce that are specifically configured to support the Center's critical national security role.

As you weigh the further consolidation of our defense infrastructure, we urge you to carefully consider the important national security mission of LAAFB and its SMC, as well as the thousands of workers whose jobs are tied to these facilities through our aerospace companies. We look forward to discussing this critically important matter with you.

Sincerely,



HOWARD L. BERMAN
Member of Congress



HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress



JANICE HAHN
Member of Congress